

**Before the
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, D.C. 20554**

OCT 19 1998

In the Matter of)
)
Revision of the Commission's Rules) CC Docket No. 94-102
To Ensure Compatibility with)
Enhanced 911 Emergency Calling Systems)

**REPLY COMMENTS OF
SBC WIRELESS INC.**

SBC Wireless Inc. (SBC Wireless) presents this reply to comments filed pursuant to the Commission's request for input regarding an Ad Hoc Alliance ("Alliance") ex parte presentation advocating a modified version of the Alliance's "strongest signal" proposal. The modified proposal imposes a threshold "adequate signal" gateway on the Alliance's ill-advised "strongest signal proposal."¹ The problems and concerns associated with the Alliance's "strongest signal proposal" are well documented in this docket.² Not a single entity filed in support of the Alliance's modified "adequate signal" proposal.³ Rather, all entities commenting expressed concerns that the modified proposal

¹ See Ex Parte Presentation of Ad Hoc Alliance for Public Access to 911 dated September 17, 1998.

² See, e.g., *Ex Parte Presentation of the Cellular Telecommunications Industry Association and Attachments thereto*, Letter of Brian F. Fontes to Chairman Kennard dated June 3, 1998, filed June 4, 1998. *Ex Parte submission of National Emergency Number Association, Association of Public Safety Communications Officials International, Inc. and National Association of State Nine-One-One Administrators*, Letter from James R. Hobson to Magalie Roman Salas dated and filed February 23, 1998 in CC Docket 94-102; CTIA Comments, CC Docket 94-102 filed October 7, 1998, Attachment 1 (CTIA "Adequate Signal" Comments).

³ See Comments of United States Cellular Corporation; Comments of Ameritech Mobile Communications, Inc.; Comments of SBC Wireless; Comments of Texas 9-1-1 Providers; Comments of the Rural Telecommunications Group; Comments of BellSouth Corporation; Further Comments of Bell Atlantic Mobile, Inc.; CTIA Comments; AT&T Wireless Comments; all filed October 7, 1998 in CC Docket 94-102 (hereinafter referred to as "Adequate Signal" Comments).

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gives rise to the same problems as the strongest signal.⁴ As the Cellular Telecommunications Industry Association (“CTIA”) notes, “because the adequate signal proposal is predicated on the same flawed technical assumptions as the original ‘strongest signal’ proposal it too would do more harm than good.”⁵ AT&T Wireless likewise notes that “all credible evidence leads” to the conclusion “that the Alliance’s proposal, both in its original form and as revised, represents a significant threat to wireless customers’ safety.”⁶

Quite simply, the same problems that were present with the strongest signal proposal are present with the modified “adequate signal” proposal -- except on a somewhat lesser scale since under the “adequate signal” proposal not every analog cellular 911 call would be effected. Rather, only those analog cellular call attempts that fall below the Alliance’s “threshold” of what constitutes an “adequate signal”, would be affected. As various commentators note, the problem with the Alliance’s “strongest signal” proposal was not just that it required selection of the strongest signal on every call, but the fact that the proposal placed undue reliance on cellular forward control channel for determining which signal is strongest, among other concerns.⁷ As CTIA notes “the fundamental problem with any proposal that is based only on the handset’s measurement of the signal strength of a cellular system’s forward control channel is that the forward

⁴ Id.

⁵ CTIA “Adequate Signal” Comments, p. 8.

⁶ AT&T “Adequate Signal” Comments, p. 3

⁷ See Bell Atlantic “Adequate Signal” Comments, p. 1-2; AT&T Wireless “Adequate Signal “ Comments, p. 2; CTIA “Adequate Signal” Comments, pp. 2-3, 8-10.

control channel, by itself does not indicate whether an emergency call will go through.”⁸ The “adequate signal” proposal suffers from the same flawed rationale as the “strongest signal” proposal.

SBC Wireless agrees that the more beneficial alternative would be the proposal outlined in CTIA’s “Adequate Signal” Comments -- the TIA “Automatic A/B Roaming” proposal.⁹ The proposal is summarized as one “whereby the handset overrides any “local” programming of the phone (i.e., subscriber programmed, preferred carrier only) and seeks a non-preferred carrier in the event the preferred carrier is unable to process the call”.¹⁰ As CTIA notes, there is at least one handset currently on the market with such a feature -- a feature that was developed to meet presumed consumer desires and to potentially gain a competitive distinction, not in response to regulatory mandates.

Presumably, if the problem exists, competitive forces will compel other manufacturers to add such functionality to their analog handsets without regulatory intervention or mandates. As SBC Wireless earlier noted however, if the Commission feels compelled to promulgate a regulatory mandated 911 handset functionality, it should do so only after the proposal has been thoroughly reviewed by and input received from the industry, including the handset manufacturers, industry standards groups and the public safety community. If the Commission decides to pursue a possible mandate of 911 functionality for handsets it should be the TIA “Automatic A/B” proposal and not the Alliance’s modified “adequate signal proposal”. As detailed in this latest round of

⁸ CTIA “Adequate Signal” comments, p. 10.

⁹ See CTIA “Adequate Signal” Comments, pp. 11-12 and applicable attachments.

¹⁰ CTIA “Adequate Signal” Comments, p. 11 and Attachment 1.

pleadings and throughout this docket, the “strongest signal” and “adequate signal” proposals contain the same flawed reliance on the forward control channels and will detrimentally affect the provision of wireless 911 service.¹¹

The Commission, if compelled to mandate analog handset functionality in this area, should seek input from the manufacturers on the ability to include the TIA A/B Roaming proposal and the additional cost per handset of such a mandate. A prime concern of the Commission should continue to be the affordability of wireless service to the average consumer, including equipment. Finally, as stated in SBC Wireless’ “Adequate Signal” Comments, any requirement should be promulgated as a “handset manufactured after a specific date” requirement.¹² The Commission should not render a decision that would instantly make existing inventory and handsets in the hands of consumers or carriers obsolete.

¹¹ See note 1 *supra*.

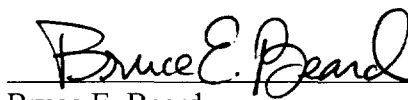
¹² See SBC Wireless “Adequate Signal” Comments, p. 7.

CONCLUSION

For the reasons stated herein and in the initial "Adequate Signal" Comments, the Commission should not pursue the Alliance's "adequate signal" proposal. If the Commission decides to mandate handset functionality instead of leaving such decisions to the manufacturers and the competitive market, the TIA "Automatic A/B Roaming" proposal should be examined.

Respectfully Submitted,

SBC Wireless, Inc.

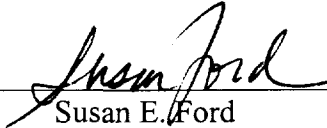
A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bruce E. Beard". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I, hereby certify that I have on this _____ day of October, 1998, I served copies of the foregoing Comments of SBC Wireless, Inc., by first-class mail, postage prepaid, or otherwise hand-delivered to the parties below.


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